DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 248 465 CS 007 745

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TITLE Plan for an Interdisciplinary Turco-Danish Pilot Study of the Collective v the Individual Nature of the Response to Literature. Fairytale: An Interdisciplinary Turco-Danish Study of the Collective v. the Individual Nature of the Response to Literature. Report No. 1.
INSTITUTION Bosphorus Univ., Istanbul (Turkey). Dept. of Language and Literature.; Copenhagen Univ. (Denmark). Dept. of English.
PUB DATE 1 Feb 80
NOTE 13p.; Sponsored jointly by Unesco, NATO, and the Danish Research Council for the Humanities. For related documents, see CS 007 745-759.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cross Cultural Studies; Cultural Context; Cultural Differences; *Folk Culture; Foreign Countries; Literature Appreciation; *Reader Response; *Reading Research; *Research Design; Research Methodology
IDENTIFIERS Denmark; *Fairy Tales; *Response to Literature; Turkey

ABSTRACT

Prepared as part of the interdisciplinary Turko-Danish Fairytale Project, this paper describes the design of a study intended to discover: (1) if there are aesthetic principles that are universal and that guide readers' experiences of works of literature; (2) whether the principles are built into people by their cultural, economic, and social experiences; or (3) whether readers' reactions are almost totally individualistic. After brief discussions of the rationale, purpose, and implications of the study, the paper offers information about the subjects, the texts used, and the data collecting procedures. The remainder of the paper consists of a tentative timetable and budget for the study. (FL)

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FAIRYTALE

An Interdisciplinary Turco-Danish Study of the Collective v. the Individual Nature of the Response to Literature

Report No. 1

Title: PLAN FOR AN INTERDISCIPLINARY TURCO-DANISH PILOT STUDY OF THE COLLECTIVE V THE INDIVIDUAL NATURE OF THE RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

CAUTION. This is essentially the unrevised plan as originally outlined in November 1978. Later changes refer only to personnel and budget. For more detailed plans and actual progress reports, please apply to the below addresses.

Author(s)/Editor(s): Cay Dollerup (ed.)

Date, original: 29/9/78 **Revised:** 13/11/78 -11/12/78 - 12/3/79

Last Revision: 1/2/80 (FINAL- Please see comment above).

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PLAN FOR AN INTERDISCIPLINARY TURCO-DANISH PILOT STUDY OF THE COLLECTIVE V THE INDIVIDUAL NATURE OF THE RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

Rationale

A moot point about literature is its collective v. its individual nature, both as created and as read.

In the experience of literature, in the process of decoding, some critics and readers sometimes speak about the individual perception of a work in terms that imply that this perception is basically identical with all readers at all times and places, or at least with all readers in one nation at a given time. In so doing, they take it for granted that there are certain characteristics of the functioning of the human mind which express themselves in similar patterns or in terms of similar aesthetic principles.

From a theoretical point of view the most promising points of departure for testing whether the above hypothesis is correct are found in structuralist and marxist views on literature and in their evaluations of aesthetic response patterns.

The hypothesis can be tested by means of the methods in modern empirical research into reader response. On the one side this type of research has uncovered highly individualistic responses (i.e. the linguistic expressions that readers give to their experiences) (e.g. I.A. Richards), and on the other, fundamental similarities, at least among culturally, socially and nationally homogeneous groups of readers (e.g. Hansson, 1959). This type of research has

revealed that the actual experience is more facetted than one would suspect from spontaneous linguistic responses (e.g. Hansson, 1964). It has been shown that carefully worked out questionnaires can yield significant results and that the answers can be subjected to informative and valuable statistical analysis (Bostrup, Dollerup, and Rosenberg Hansen (1974-1980)), and that it is possible to conduct international studies and compare the results internationally (Purves (ed.), 1973).

Purpose and Implications

Using an interdisciplinary approach, combining criticism, psychology, linguistics and statistics, the purpose of the present study is to yield some preliminary empirical information on the collective v. the individual experience of literature. To put it otherwise, to determine if there are aesthetic principles which are universal and guide the readers' experiences of works of literature, or whether the aesthetic principles are built into people by their cultural, economic, and social experiences, or whether these principles are almost totally individualistic.

This can be done by using the methods of reader-response research in connection with readers' experiences of the type of literature which traditional critical research has demonstrated displays cross-cultural structural similarities, viz. legends, folk tales, and fairy-tales. Furthermore, this is the type of traditional tale which is most often associated with a supernational collective narrative tradition, and is said to show the basic aesthetic, social, and individual concerns of man both by critics (Propp, Frye, Wheelwright, Vickery, Cassirer) and by psychoanalysts (e.g. C.G. Jung, Geza Roheim, S. Freud).

The long-range perspective, then, is that by investigating and charting readers' experiences of the same tales in many countries,

this study should determine:

1. Similarities in responses between readers from different countries, independent of cultural, economical, educational, social, and national differences.

2. Differences in responses and attempt to explore their relationships with cultural, economical, social, and national differences.

3. Similarities and differences in responses between different groups of readers in each country involved.

The last point follows logically from the experimental set-up, and will, in itself, be of interest to national educators. The first two, however, are of prime importance to the purpose of the experiment, and in addition to this the results will also help educators and critics identify transferable and non-transferable results from reader-response research as well as critical work from other nations,and thus supplement the work started by Purves, A.C. (ed.), Literature Education in Ten Countries (1973).

The short-term perspective is to carry out a pilot study involving Denmark and Turkey. This will permit us to

a) establish two national teams of scholars who can form the nucleus of a larger international investigation if the results are encouraging,

b) combine the theoretical and practical approaches on a realistic, albeit limited, basis and thus avoid most problems which would occur if the study was multi-national from the very start,

c) establish procedures for setting up questions and experimental situations, and

d) test whether the approach seems to be sound.

Even if unsuccessful on the last point, the study will yield useful information on reader response in the respective countries.

Subjects

In the pilot study outlined here, we prefer to cover only one age-group, 18-year olds. Within this group we shall have a break-down into those who are still at school and those who have left the school system.

The choice is determined by two factors: this group is fairly easy to reach, and - provided the experiment is to expand to other countries - it will facilitate comparison with Purves (1973) which also covers this age group.

The Texts

The texts to be used in the actual study are three fairy-tales, each of no more than 10 pages, and selected according to their usefulness in view of the theoretical purpose of the experiment as well as the responses they elicit in preliminary studies.

The procedure of selection is tentatively as follows:

About thirty of the most popular and widespread fairy-tales listed in The Types of Folk Tale (Aarne and Thompson, Helsinki, 1964) catalogue numbers 300 to 749 (internationally recorded fairy-tales) are to be studied and graded with a view to the theoretical framework.

Each of the six to ten most suitable ones are then handed out to c. 20 readers in the 18-year age group, who then write essays on them in both Denmark and Turkey. The essays are then used for drawing up tentative questionnaires which can be discussed from theoretical, methodological, practical, and statistical angles at the first conference.

The preliminary statistical assessment is that in order to get a reliable basis for statistical analysis, it is necessary to have at least 150 readings of each fairy-tale. All participants

are expected to read all fairy-tales, so that the number of readers involved will thus be 300 in each country (i.e. 150 in each individual group).

COLLECTION OF DATA (TRANSLATIONS, QUESTIONNAIRES, PROCESSING)

With a view to the long-range perspective, the source-texts should be in English and translated into Danish and Turkish by whichever procedure the national scholars consider most reliable. These translations should be revised, and finally checked in two ways, i.e. by a careful comparison between the Danish and the Turkish texts by at least two bilingual persons, and by a sentence-by-sentence discussion at the first coordinating meeting.

In order to get uniform and comparable data in both countries it is necessary to use unambiguous questionnaires which are identical in both countries. According to our own previous studies (in Scandinavia), and Purves (1973), they should cover background data; and - after the reading - a charting of responses.

The questionnaires must comprise information on school systems and specific features (if any); the readers' social, educational, literary backgrounds and interests; and a number of questions at different levels of aesthetic appreciation about the re-creation.

As mentioned above, a preliminary questionnaire can be drawn up against discussions at the first conference, but it must be tested out and revised with readers in the appropriate age group. And every revision must be coordinated, and checked (in its translation), and tested again. It is not until we are sure that the questionnaires are as good as humanly possible that the real

collecting of data can begin.

The answers are to be punched on standardised punchcards, and will be processed in Copenhagen.

TIMETABLE (TENTATIVE)

Stage 1: Planning

The theoretical framework is to be established, and written as an internal report.

The thirty fairy-tales are selected and sent out to all members of the two teams. The six to ten most suitable ones are selected.

Duration: c. 1 year.

Stage 2: Preparation for first conference

Translation of the fairy-tales from English versions.

Comparison of the Danish and Turkish versions by two bilingual persons.

Written essays to be collected on each fairy-tale.

Results to be deduced, translated, and sent to coordinator.

1st draft of questionnaires (from theoretical report and essays).

Duration: 3 months.

Stage 3: Conference

a. Discussion of theoretical framework.
b. Discussion of the spontaneous responses (the essays).
c. Selection of the three fairy-tales to be used.
d. Check of translations of these fairy-tales on a sentence-by-sentence basis.
e. A preliminary view on statistical requirements.

f. 2nd draft of questionnaire.

g. Instruction in future testing of questionnaire.

Duration: 8 days.

Stage 4: National preparations for experiment/coordination

Questionnaires tested out on groups of c. ten subjects for each new version: Read out with the first group(s), filled in by the later ones. After each round, the resultant changes are co-ordinated. The procedure is repeated until no additional corrections are necessary.

Duration: 6 months.

Stage 5: Conference

Conference for final check and for setting up the extensive collecting of data.

Duration: 8 days.

Stage 6: Extensive collection of data

Printing/duplication of questionnaires and texts.

Texts given to readers.

Answers punched on standardised punchcards.

Punchcards sent to Copenhagen.

Duration: 3 months.

Stage 7: Statistical analysis

Data-processing and statistical analysis by Carsten Rosenberg Hansen and the programmer of the Institute of Applied and Mathematical Linguistics of the University of Copenhagen.

Duration: 3 months

Stage 8: Conclusions

Preliminary comments on statistical results sent out to all participants.

9

Corrections and additions sent to coordination.

New draft of final report.

New corrections and additions.

Final common report.

Decision on whether the results justify expanding the scope of the experiment.

Stage 9:

Local reports/Going international?

TENTATIVE BUDGET

The following items are free or paid for outside the study's budget:

Scholarly work (part of in-job work).

Statistical analysis (Carsten Rosenberg Hansen - co-author).

Programming (done by the programmer of the Institute of Applied Linguistics and Mathematics, University of Copenhagen).

Computer-time: probably Department of English, University of Copenhagen.

Postage: departmental.

The following items must be covered within the national frameworks:

Turkey (tentative)

	T.L.
Printing/duplication of texts and questionnaires	c. 25,000
Punchcards (c. 5,000)	c. 9,000
Punching	c. 5,000
Assistant	c. 29,000
Unexpected expenditures (travels, typing)	c. 45,000
Translation (c. 10 x c. 10 pages)	c. 15,000
Sum total	128,000

Denmark (tentative)

	D.kr.
Printing/duplication of texts and questionnaires	c. 9,000
Punchcards (c. 5.000), magnetic tape	c. 2,500
Punching	c. 6,000
Assistant	c. 23,000
Unexpected expenditures (printing, transport, photocopying, etc.)	c. 9,000
Printing of final report	c. 13,000
2 linguistic revisions of c. 10 x 10 page texts (bilingual)	c. 4,000
Sum total	c. D.kr. 66,500

The following items must be covered by the international part of the budget.

Coordination (tentative

	US$
2 journeys for one person Copenhagen/Istanbul (probably stages 6 and 8), including stay	c. 2,000
4 conferences with 6 participants (stages 1,3,5, and 8) Copenhagen/Istanbul, including stays	c. 14,000
Unexpected expenditures, photocopying	c. 600
Sum total	US$ 16,600

PLEASE NOTE: COORDINATION HAS NECESSITATED MORE CONFERENCES THAN THE ONES FORESEEN IN THIS BUDGET

Personnel

The members of the national teams are all co-authors of the final report. The organization of the project is based on a division of labour where most of the theoretical work takes place in Turkey, and the practical analysis and experimental set-up are the responsibility of the Danish participants.

As of November 1979, the personnel are (in alphabetical order):

Cay Dollerup (Dk), *responsible for practical coordination (meetings, questionnaires) and reference to reader response research* (first draft stage 8). Curr. vitae: Cand.mag. 1970. Research posts, University of Copenhagen 1970-76. Senior lecturer, Department of English, University of Copenhagen, 1976 - . Work and previous experience: monographs and articles on e.g. translation and reader response. 1968 coordinator for the start of Nordic research project comprising 5 different studies of reader response; director of two, 1968-73, 1969-80.

Dilek Doltaş (T), *literary and critical coordination of the research to be done on aethetic theories, criticism, fairy-tales,* (esp. stage 1). Curr. vitae: B.A. Smith College, Mass, U.S.A., 1967; Ph.D. Hacettepe University, Ankara 1971. Lecturer of English Department of Humanities, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 1967-70; Lecturer, Department of English Literature, Hacettepe University 1970-72. Lecturer 1972-77; Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics and Literature, Bosphorus University 1977 - . Work and previous experience: book on the ideas and the narrative art of Malory and Tennyson as reflected in their Arthurian tales, articles and papers on Chaucer, satire and fairy-tale in contemporary Turkish literature.

Iven Reventlow (Dk), *responsible for development of questionnaires.* Curr. vitae: Research posts, University of Copenhagen, 1960-77, senior lecturer Department of Psychology, University of Copenhagen, 1977. Work and previous experience: Thesis (1970) on investigating complex psychobiological phenomena, and numerous articles, mostly on ethological questions. Consultant psychologist on 3 investigations in Nordic research project into reader response, 1968-80.

Carsten Rosenberg Hansen (Dk), *in charge of statistical analyses*. Curr. vitae: Teacher's certificate 1971, postgraduate studies in psychology, statistics, and computer science. Junior lecturer in educational statistics and the development of research methods on teaching since 1971, at the Department of psychology and educational research of The National College for Training of Vocational Teachers, Copenhagen. Work and previous experience: reports, papers, and articles on programmed instruction, reading comprehension, and reader response. Statistical analyst on 2 investigations in Nordic research project into reader response, 1969-80, and Danish project for developing reading comprehension tests (with Dollerup et al.), 1974 - .

Cevza Sevgen (T), *literary and critical research on literary comprehension and appreciation*, B.A. Robert College, Istanbul, Turkey, 1970; Ph.D. Istanbul University, 1973. Lecturer 1974-78; Associated Professor, Department of Linguistics and Literature, Bosphorus University, 1978 - . Work and previous experience: thesis on concept of the hero in medieval English romances, and on public and patriotic themes in Elizabethan literature engendered by the sixteenth century English maritime enterprise, now working on the use of enchantment in medieval romances.